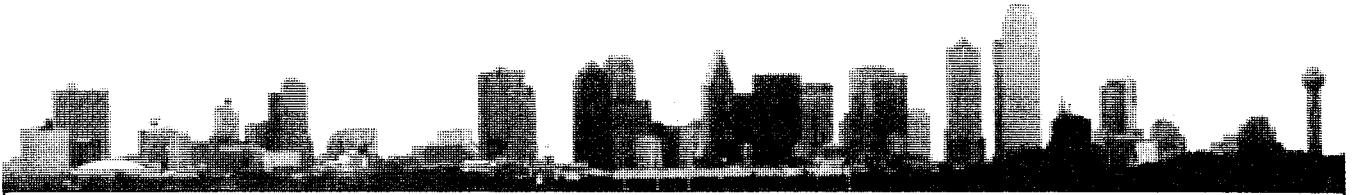


MCCC NEWS

Metroplex Commodore Computer Club



Fort Worth

Volume 10 Issue 9 — September 1992

Dallas

METCOM 92

It's almost here
by David Owens

Two months. Only two months left. Make your plans now to attend the greatest Commodore Show of the decade!!! Ok, Ok. Would you believe the year? On October 24th, 1992 the Metroplex Commodore Computer Club (MCCC for short for those new to the club) will put on METCOM for the eighth time in so many years. So you ask, "What is METCOM?" METCOM is a day of fun and excitement for the whole family. It's a day of education, presentations, dealers and our club area. It is mainly a day for you. But I get ahead of myself. Let me start again.

This year our thrust at METCOM will be education. The classes we held last year were so enthusiastically received, we decided to center this year's show around them. Harold Williams is in charge of our classes this year and (being a teacher at heart) has some great classes for us to attend. There should be something for just about everyone. The classes that have been scheduled are: AmigaOS 2.0, ARexx, *CanDo*, telecommunications, and the Video-Toaster. The classes will have a small fee based on the length of the class and the classes will run from 1 1/2 to 3 hours with scheduled breaks. Included in this newsletter, you should find a registration form for the tentative classes. If any class does not have enough interest, another class may be scheduled in its place. Check the registration form for more details.

Next up are the presentations. All of the presentations will be FREE!!! That's right. FREE. These will be open to anyone. Your Uncle Bill, Aunt Martha or your friend who owns an IBM and wants to see what a real computer can do. The presentations will last about an hour with time for Q&A afterwards. We have three presentations lined up with one more to be scheduled. The presenters include some impressive dealers such as Ansoft & Metropolitan and the developer INOVAtronics. The topics haven't been firmed up as of yet, but these three have never let us down on exciting discussions and

presentations. It has been rumored that Commodore will be at METCOM and have exciting news and maybe some of the new machines that the rumor mill has been talking about. The October newsletter will have a more complete agenda of the presentations and topics to be discussed. Spread the word.

Dealers. Our dealer tables have always been an exciting event at METCOM and we expect they will be again this year. Metropolitan has already signed up for a huge area of dealer space, and I know from previous experience they will have lots of goodies to browse through and buy. They have always had good sales items at METCOM. INOVAtronics has indicated that they are planning to make an appearance in the dealer's area. They are responsible for such great Amiga products as *CanDo*, *Directory Opus* (not the funny bird with the big nose!), *Hyper Helper*, the Hi-Q tower and more. Check them out. Computer Etc. (C-64 & C-128 goodies) indicated that they wanted space before we even had space available. Way to go. These are all I know about at this time, but I'll have a more complete list for the October newsletter. Let's plan on supporting our dealers and developers at METCOM.

Last, but not least, is our club area. This will be held in the same area as the dealer/developer's room. In years past, we have had a flea market, the club library, help tables, 13 months for the price of 12 memberships and renewals, and digitizing pictures of you and your loved ones. Ok, Ok... that is what was done in the past. What, you may ask, are we doing this year?? We will have a special price on new memberships/renewals, the club library will be available for you to get the newest and oldest programs/files/pictures, and the flea market. I guess one reason I always enjoy going to METCOM every year is for the flea market. Last year I bought a hard disk controller card, extra memory, and a couple of games I

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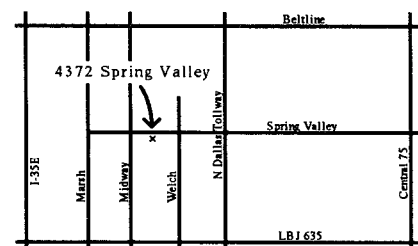
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Mark your calendars for
October 8th & 9th

Lee Stranahan and a surprise guest are coming to do a two day seminar with us. The first day will be on the Toaster and the second will be totally Lightwave! Don't miss the Toaster event of the year! Come for one or both !

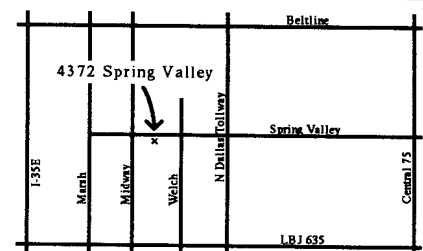
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Amiga Library News

Public Domain and Shareware Picks
from Bill Raecke

PageStream Stuff

It's a good month for *PageStream* owners. There are a set of various templates on MCCC-A_430 including one that shows how to use the Post Office approved bar-coding to put on mailing labels. On that same disk are a couple of updated import drivers... one for IFF pictures and one for DR2D files. And on MCCC-A_431 you'll find a new Postscript printer driver.

On MCCC-A_433 are four new Postscript fonts: Abbess, Accord, Amethyst and AnticFont. All are very nice and worth adding to your collection.

Amethyst

Abbess

AnticFont

ClipArt

On MCCC-A_430, you'll find a large set of EPS ClipArt. There are 34 clips in all... and they're all worth getting. Since they are EPS format, and therefore structured clips rather than bitmapped clips, they look good when printed out at any size to any printer. And, if you are using *PageStream*, you can even edit them to your liking. Check 'em out.



Mandelmania by Markus Zehnder

For those of you who like to play around with fractals, there are a couple of new toys this month. The first is *Mandelmania*, which you can find on MCCC-A_431. I know that by now most people have all the Mandelbrot programs they can use, but *Mandelmania* is one that you definitely need to add to your collection. It offers several very nice features. The most important feature is **speed**. *Mandelmania* is *fast*! In fact, it's the

fastest I've run across. On my machine (a 68030 running at 33 mhz) the basic Mandelbrot is calculated in 3 seconds on a 640 x 400 screen.

There is a point-and-click zoom feature, cursor key scrolling and a variable window size for a fast preview of your settings. *Mandelmania* can support all screen modes including full overscan and superbitmap autoscroll displays.

There is also a full implementation of the Julia set — meaning that you can display a different Julia fractal for each point in the Mandelbrot set... and then, of course, you can explore the resulting Julia set just the same as the Mandelbrot from which it was derived. Also included is an ARexx port which can automate your explorations or which can build standard .anim animations. A couple of sample ARexx scripts are included to get you started.

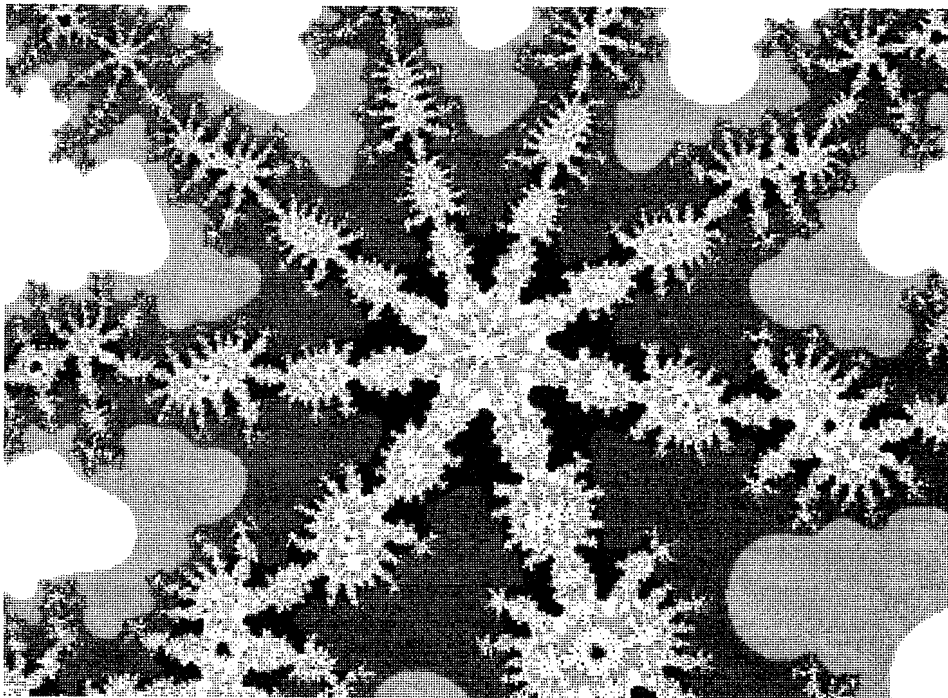


Lyapunov by Steve Hines

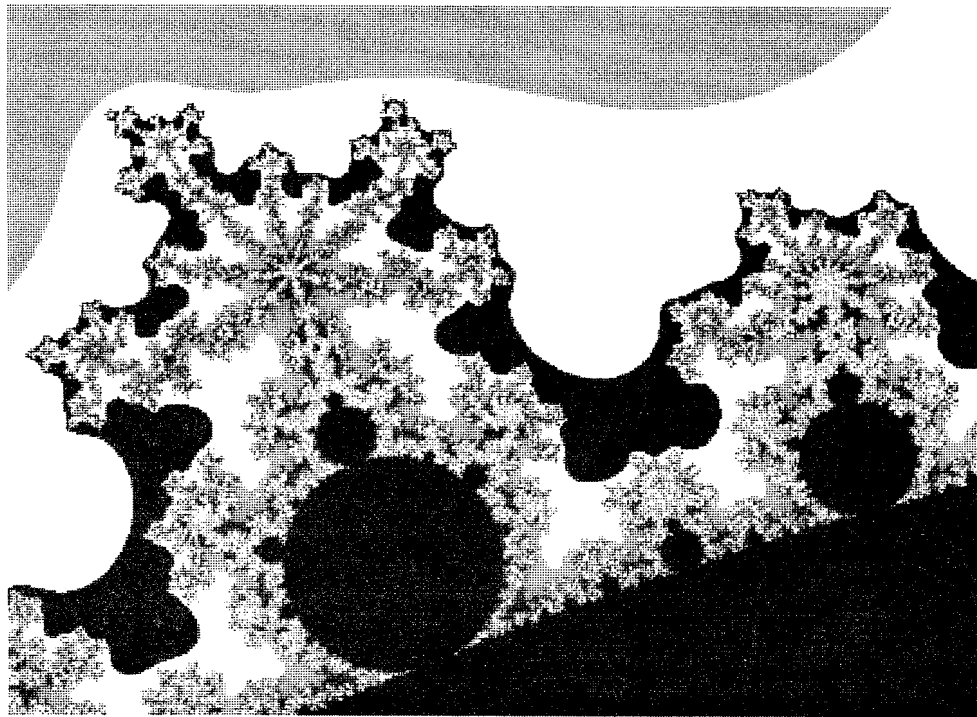
Lyapunov is another fractal generator. Instead of the Mandelbrot set, this one explores a set called the Lyapunov set (surprise!). The pictures are very beautiful. A couple of examples are included. The program itself is very full-featured. Lores, Hires, Non-interlaced and Interlaced modes are all available. Although overscan is not provided for, pictures can be any size on a super bitmapped screen. An obvious oversight is the lack of a palette requester... but I have found that modifying the palette in another program after the fact is perfectly acceptable.

Lyapunov has one problem... it is *SLOW*! This may not be a complaint with the program itself — it may simply be that this fractal type takes a while to generate. In any case, be prepared to wait. For example, one of the pictures included with the program took 17 hours to generate on a 68020 equipped Amiga running at 16 mhz. To make the waiting easier, *Lyapunov* has been designed to run quite nicely in the background. It can be set to any priority level and it can be set to show the picture as it progresses or not... and if

you don't need to watch it, the picture is generated in fast RAM rather than using precious chip RAM. When the picture is complete, it is automatically saved to a predetermined IFF file. You get to choose the destination and file name.



You'll find this one on MCCC-A_431 as well... the same disk as *Mandelmania*.



Tracker-Music

For those who are collecting Tracker and MED music files, you'll find several nice additions on MCCC-A_432. My favorites? Look for a theme with eight variations composed by Mozart at the age of nine. Also check out a tune called Virginny; a ragtime piece with a very realistic honky-tonk piano. And there's a tune called Virgin that makes for nice listening. As always, Tracker and MED music files are distributed with players on the disk. All you need to do is click on the player icon and then select the mod or med tune to play. By the way, Virginny comes with its own player. Click on the Virginny icon to play it. ✓

Quantum

info from Mike Simoneaux of the
New Orleans Commodore Klub

Owners of Quantum hard disk drives should be aware that there could be potential problems with their mass storage devices. According to recent posts to several of the major BBS's, there are problems with using some of the newer Quantum drives — such as the LPS 52 and 105, and the newer 120 and 240 megabyte SCSI units. Some problems reported include the inability to use more than one such drive with an Amiga 2091 controller, or an Amiga 3000. Others have reported data errors while using the newer 120 and 240 megabyte units.

All of this should be of great concern to Amiga owners, as most of the Amiga computers sold with hard disks in the last two years have come with Quantum drives, and many owners buying third-party controllers have also specified or wound up with Quantum drives due to the sterling reputation that these units have acquired over the years. I personally have owned two such drives and have not had any problems with either of them, but if you are experiencing unusual crashes, loss of data, or the inability to access more than one hard drive hooked up to your SCSI buss, please call either the controller vendor, or Quantum.

During a recent call to Quantum for other purposes, I questioned one of the technicians about the sound emanating from Quantum hard drives approximately every 15 minutes while in use, whether being accessed or not. I also inquired as to why Quantum drives are apparently able to low level format so quickly — sometimes in mere seconds.

The answers to my questions pretty much confirmed my own suspicions. The noise heard about every 15 minutes is due to the drive re-calibrating itself due to thermal changes during operation. In other words, the drive's circuitry calls for a test and re-calibration due to the changes in temperature that the drive undergoes during operation. This assures that your drive will always be properly aligned.

How is it possible for a drive to calibrate itself? It's possible because Quantum drives have servo tracks permanently embedded on the hard disk platters. These tracks act as a lasting guide that the mechanism can count on during calibration. This also explains why Quantum drives low level format so quickly. They don't really undergo a typical low level format. What happens when a low level format command is issued to one of these units is that the area where the file record is kept on the on-board drive controller is wiped clean. This takes very little time. Since the drive uses embedded servo tracks, it would be pointlessly repetitious to again lay down a low level format of track and sector information on the drive platters. This information is already permanently available to the on-board controller by design. ✓

Virus Alert

bulletin from the MN Libertarian
May-June 1992 newsletter

Here is a brief rundown of the latest viruses on the loose. Be on the lookout!

- George Bush virus — Doesn't do anything, but you can't get rid of it until November.
- Ted Kennedy virus — Crashes your computer, but denies it ever happened.
- Warren Commission virus — Won't allow you to open your files for 75 years.
- Jerry Brown virus — Blanks your screen and begins flashing an 800 number.
- David Duke virus — Makes your screen go completely white.
- Congress virus — Overdraws your disk space.
- Pat Buchanan virus — Shifts all output to the extreme right of the screen and prohibits importation of any new files.
- Dan Quayle virus — Forces your computer to play PGA Tour from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM six days a week.
- Bill Clinton virus — Mutates from region to region; we're not exactly sure what it does.
- Richard Nixon virus — A.K.A. Tricky Dicky virus — you can kick it out, but it always makes a comeback.
- H. Ross Perot virus — Same as the Jerry Brown virus, but with nicer fonts and it appears to have had a lot more money put into its development. ✓

METCOM 92

continued from page 1

had been looking for that had gone out of publication. I also got rid of all those old software/hardware items that I no longer had any use for. Buying or selling, the flea market is a really great time. Pete Goad is our flea market Guru this year. He is in charge of all those things that Fred Noble has been pulling his hair out over for the last few years. Thanks, Fred, for all the good work. Pete will be issuing information on how to turn in those items you wish to get rid of at your next chapter meeting and in the newsletter. If you have any questions, give him a call.

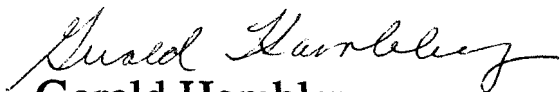
One last thing I'd like to remind you of are the door prizes that we give away. We have several things turned in and others on their way. I can't tell what goodies we will have, but they should be worth showing up for and winning. Well, that's all I have for now. Make plans to show up for METCOM. It will be worth your time. ✓

Ansoft is happy to announce that it is celebrating its 7th year anniversary as a source for computer hardware, software and technical support in the Metroplex. We have also just completed our first year as an *Authorized Amiga Dealer*. We would like to take this opportunity to thank MCCC and its membership for all the support they have given us in the past year. It has been a very exciting year for the Amiga community with an ever increasing number of quality products. We can't help but look forward to 1993 with great anticipation.

I would invite any club members who have not already stopped by to talk with us to do so. Don't forget to bring your MCCC membership card and save some \$\$ on your software purchases.

Thank you all again, and we look forward to serving you in the future.

Sincerely,


Gerald Hambley

President
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Charts & Graphs

a chance to save some money

by Steve Davis — The Boarding House BBS

This message is intended to be a quick look at one of the most over-hyped software packages for the Amiga. I am speaking of *Charts & Graphs*, a program being sold to unsuspecting Amiga users who haven't heard all the details of this program yet. The cover of the instruction manual to *Charts & Graphs* says "Professional presentation of all your business data...". Let me give you MY story and then I'll let you decide.

I purchased *Charts & Graphs* hoping to find a serious program written with the intention of helping me create PROFESSIONAL LOOKING charts for my business. I wanted a chart program that would work with my Amiga 3000 and create the wide range of types and styles of charts that my work demands. To the best of my knowledge, this is the ONLY piece of software out for the Amiga which has these design goals in mind. Unfortunately, *Charts & Graphs* does not live up to my expectations. Indeed, the program lacks in so many respects that I cannot explain them all in detail, given the format of this review.

I will review various topics, devoting a paragraph or so to each, and give the program's performance a grade letter from A to F, much like the American public school grading system.

Look and Feel: *Charts & Graphs* has its own look and feel. I have not tried to run it on a 1.3 machine, but it doesn't look or behave very well on my Amiga 3000. Indeed, the manual's illustrations were taken from a 1.3 computer and it does not look much better. For one thing, it IGNORES virtually every style suggestion in Commodore's style manual. The data entry screen opens up with the same overscan settings as Workbench, for instance, but the window will only scale as wide as 640 pixels. In most (but not all) windows, buttons are INDENTED and other graphic elements are OUTDENTED. Figure that one out! Instead of CANCEL buttons on requesters, there are misleading EXIT buttons. In some requesters (but not all), there are giant UGLY headers like "****WARNING****" that are obviously made by scaling up an 8 point font. The menu colors are ORANGE on light gray. Some requesters put the OK and EXIT buttons at the TOP of the window, even though there is no real reason for them to be there. Obviously, no thought went into ergonomics, or the expectations of the end user. I can understand that programmers want to be creative, but this interface is BAD. Not good, but BAD.

For Look and Feel, I give *Charts & Graphs* an F-! (that's F MINUS).

Ease of Use: Again, I find that this program fails. This programmer must have his own ideas about how object oriented graphics systems should work, because I have NEVER seen a program that makes simple tasks so

difficult! This program's font requesters, for instance, should be nominated for the world's all-time WORST design in history. Imagine a font requester which will ONLY search the FONTS: logical directory, does not support the new outline font technology of Amiga OS 2.04, AND only shows you a few LETTERS of the font's name! This is an accurate description of *Charts & Graphs* font requesters! If you wanted to load the fifty point version of Letter Gothic font, you would have to search for "D:erGothic.50" in the font requester. Why? The file requesters are not only non-standard, but also fairly difficult to use. I could go on for pages about every little feature of this product which either does not work the way you expect it to or does not work in the way it should. Many functions (such as changing the number of colors in the work screen) require that you EXIT and RESTART the program! Creating anything but the most rudimentary image in *Charts & Graphs* is painfully difficult.

For Ease of Use, I give *Charts & Graphs* a D! You can get an acceptable image out of it within thirty seconds of loading the program, though not until you have learned all the little quirks and hassles that you must avoid.

Output Quality: Output quality cannot be measured, and your perception of the quality of an image is tempered by what you expect to produce. To be honest, I didn't expect very high quality from *Charts & Graphs* after seeing the advertisements, but I thought that these sample images were probably created by the programmer himself and didn't represent what someone with a strong will and artistic talent could create with the program. But, I have to report that the best output quality I have EVER achieved with this program is DISMAL. Every variable the user can set has unnecessary limits, frustrating quirks, or unexpected results. The program will let you use images larger than your computer's resolution, but the blitting functions used to make the graph often produce rectangles instead of the desired shape. The line graphs are unbelievably ugly because of the way they are drawn with two parallel lines instead of one. The pie graph can only be viewed from the "northeast" and the slices often overlap each other. So-called 3-D graphs are often distorted, and can only be viewed from the "southeast". The labels for each element in the X axis of a graph constantly overlap one another and the only solution (which is even in the manual) is to go into the data editor and cut out the offending labels.

For Output Quality, I give *Charts & Graphs* a D! Yes, you can create real charts and graphs, but there are no frills. There is NO graph in *Charts & Graphs* that can't be created (with about twice as much effort, however) in *Deluxe Paint*. What's missing? How about

the ability to view 3-D charts from different perspectives? The ability to import (and subsequently export) 24-bit images, or DR2D outline files? How about graduated background fills (very common in the PC market); or support for shadows, hi-lites or true outline fonts?

Documentation: In a word, presumptuous. The programmer must have written this one by himself, because there is an occasional technobabble remark used to explain away a feature which does not work well using *Charts & Graphs*. For instance, he explains why complicated charts scale incorrectly by saying "Because the screen pixels are discreet entities (you know, quanta), the more columns we have on screen, the greater the round off error will be." The manual then launches into a four page diatribe explaining how to make a chart that is scaled incorrectly to APPEAR correct.

For Documentation, I give *Charts & Graphs* a C. Though the book spends more time than it should with lame-brain tutorials, it does have the three qualities that I find essential: First, wire binding so it can be read flat on a table. Second, a good index. Third, intelligent font choices.

Functionality: This program crashes my Amiga 3000 constantly. It is a memory hog (especially chip RAM), since the executable is 586,424 bytes (yes, 572 kilobytes!) and takes as much as 788,000 bytes from my system just to run. On my same hard drive, *Imagine 2.0* is only nine thousand bytes larger and is one of the most diverse and powerful programs I have ever used. I haven't tried *Charts & Graphs* on anything other than my system but it is sluggish at 25 Mhz. As mentioned earlier, the program makes plenty of scaling and position errors while calculating the graph, and really can't be trusted with anything more sophisticated than a lemonade stand's quarterly earnings report. Just the fact that it doesn't have the 2.0 look and feel ALONE indicates that the programmer is incompetent to me, since I have had 2.03 for a year and a half and 2.04 has been available to developers for over six months.

For Functionality, I give *Charts & Graphs* a D. I reserve the F in this category for programs that don't work on my computer at all. Though this program is buggy and crash-prone, it will run. It's a lot like *PageStream* was before 2.0 came out. There are so many problems that I feel like a beta-tester while running the thing.

User Satisfaction: None. I am absolutely no better off having this program than I was without it. It is buggy, slow, HUGE, sloppy, proprietary, ugly, over-simplified, and just doesn't perform as advertised. I believe I have found the ultimate form of copy protection: this program is SO BAD that no one in their right mind would keep TWO copies of it around. A friend wouldn't let a friend use *Charts & Graphs*.

For User Satisfaction, I give *Charts & Graphs* an F. Unless there is a significant upgrade in a few months (not likely), I will delete it from my hard drive and forget that I ever thought someone would write good business software for my favorite computer.

So, here is how the grades tally up:

TOPIC	GRADE	VALUE
Look and Feel	F-	0.00
Ease of Use	D	1.00
Output Quality	D	1.00
Documentation	C	2.00
Functionality	D	1.00
User Satisfaction	F	0.00
Total		5.00
Average		0.83 or F

In case you haven't noticed, I don't like this program. It stinks! It is lousy! It is worthless! Don't buy it! Don't steal it! Don't even demo it at your local dealer!



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Presentation Master

a professional presentation authoring system

review by Mike Schwartz — Central Texas Amiga Computer Society

Presentation Master is described by Oxxi, Inc. as a "Professional Presentation Authoring Program."

That is exactly what it is. It is the first serious attempt that I have seen on the Amiga (or any other personal computer, for that matter) to merge the worlds of desktop video\multimedia, and powerful structure business presentation graphics in one package.

First, let's be sure we understand the difference between bitmapped graphics (what most Amiga graphics are) and Structured or Vector graphics (such as those created by Gold Disk's *Professional Draw* and other illustration packages). Since bitmaps are composed of a fixed array of pixels, limited by the display capabilities of the Amiga, they are inherently low resolution. Bitmaps that exceed the display resolution of the Amiga can be edited with some software and can be imported into Desktop Publishing packages, but are impractical for desktop video, since they cannot be fully displayed on screen. While bitmapped graphics are ideal for desktop presentations or for graphics destined for video tape output, they are not well suited for output to high resolution imaging devices such as film recorders (for creating color slides) or image-setting equipment (such as Linotronics) for offset reproduction. This is where structured or vector graphics come into play. Illustrations created in structured drawing packages are limited ONLY by the resolution of the device they will be output to. This is due to the fact that the component parts of the images are defined mathematically as curves and lines instead of as groups of pixels. When output to high resolution devices, structured graphics do not have the "Jaggies" associated with bitmapped graphics.

Presentation Master supports BOTH types of graphics in one program that also lets you integrate business charts and graphs from imported or entered data, run ANIMs within your presentation, access an extensive library of clip art from other platforms (IBM and Macintosh as well as Amiga), compose your speaker notes, and create story boards to help you organize your presentation.

Editing the elements of each slide is simplified by a layering approach to allow access to certain areas of the slide for editing without affecting others. In addition to all this, *Presentation Master* also supports a variety of fonts including Compugraphic Intellifonts and Oxxi's own PolyText fonts, 12 of which are supplied with the program. Oxxi also supplies many pre-designed templates which can be used as is, or altered to your personal taste. Graphics formats supported include: HAM, 24-bit IFF, ANIM and Adobe Illustrator EPS (editable). *Presentation Master* maintains a 24-bit color palette internally (for output to devices which can support this), and can display

over 30,000 colors on screen.

The structured drawing module even does automatic tweening, shape and color morphing, as well as effects such as embossing, extrusion, gradient fills and perspective. The slide sorter interface uses a very powerful hierarchical system with "hot spots" to let you jump to appropriate sections of your presentation with the touch of a button, and allows for over 40 transition effects between slides. As all programs of this nature should, *Presentation Master* can create standalone shows for playback on any Amiga (with 512k or more).

The manual is a refreshing change from the usual poorly-written manuals that accompany some Amiga software packages. It is a 300+ page, well organized, well-illustrated guide with loads of useful and easy-to-follow tutorials covering all aspects of the software. Also included is a "Quick Reference Guide" which helps you around the interface, shows you what the supplied fonts and templates look like, and has a list of slide output service bureaus compatible with color postscript output.

Everything I have said about *Presentation Master* so far has been positive. There are some things which need to be taken into consideration before you run out and buy this software. Hardware is one of them. *Presentation Master* requires a hard drive and minimum of 2 MB of fast RAM in order to run. Even with this configuration, memory can be a limiting factor. More fast RAM (about 4 MB) and 1 MB or chip RAM are required to take full advantage of PM's features. I have evaluated this package on a 33 Mhz machine with a 33 Mhz co-processor and 12 MB of RAM and a 105 MB hard drive. With this configuration, *Presentation Master* really flies. In a low-memory environment, *Presentation Master* will still run (with the minimum configuration) but it will only load what it needs as it needs it instead of loading everything into RAM... thus slowing things down somewhat.

You will also need about 10 MB free on your hard drive to install the whole program, including clip art. The install program has 3 options: Novice, Intermediate, and Expert depending on your knowledge of AmigaDOS and your desire to customize where *Presentation Master* keeps its files. There is even a Pretend Installation which goes through the motions without actually installing so you can see if you have all the disks, and necessary hard drive space before doing the install for real. Having worked with *Presentation Master* for a few weeks now, I feel that Oxxi has released a product which fills a void in the Amiga software market. It is one of the most advanced tools available in the field of Multimedia, and it was well worth the \$245.00 that I paid of it. List price is \$399.95.



The Amiga

expectations & achievements — by Jim Meyer
from the Baton Rouge Area Commodore Enthusiasts newsletter

It's time for a trip down memory lane. The year? 1985. October, to be precise. Some 18 months after the introduction of the MacIntosh, and fairly soon after the IBM world finally made the leap to full 16-bit processing, the Amiga — an upstart computer from a company that had been acquired by Commodore — was introduced. My money had been on deposit for about a month, and I was the first lucky customer to take one of these puppies home from my dealer. It cost me just about every penny I had. The CPU — with 256K of on-board memory — cost \$1295. The nose-piece expander, which brought the machine up to a whopping 512K — was around \$200 more.

To kick things off, Commodore had a splashy television commercial. It was weird and mystical, just like the famous Mac commercial. Unlike the Mac commercial, it ran more than just once. The major computer magazines — from Byte to Compute — ran cover stories on this remarkable new machine. Color, speed, animation, 4-voice stereo sound, multitasking, and ease-of-use were new concepts in personal computing, especially when combined in a single, moderately-priced machine. Those of us in the know sat back smugly, knowing that we were in the vanguard of a revolution that would very soon change the face of computing.

That was then. Now, of course, things are different. Color was a long time coming to the Mac world, but it arrived with a vengeance. Multitasking, derided as useless, is now a feature (in one degree or another) in all the current operating systems. And Multimedia is the latest buzz-word. Who is leading this revolution? Big Blue and the Fruit Suits, that's who. The PC crowd, which finally has the processing

horsepower to support a bloated, multitasking operating system, have been frantically searching for the Next Big Thing. The Fruit Suits, who have just discovered the Public Relations potential of something we've long known as the .anim format, are just as frightened, and they've joined up with the Blue team.

Oh, what of the dream?

It's time to face facts. Despite a growing world-wide base, the Amiga is NOT about to supplant the PC's and the Mac's in the corporate world, in the schools, or in the home. The Critical Mass that we used to speak about never arrived. Remember? Just wait until we hit the One Million mark. The developers will come crawling out of the woodwork! It didn't happen then, it didn't happen at two million, and it didn't happen at three million. While Amiga's sales increased incrementally, PC and Mac sales increased exponentially. There are, relatively speaking, fewer of

us than ever.

Is this a big deal? Nope. Not unless you care about numbers. What counts is what's in front of you, how well it does what you want it to do. While it's true that we won't see anything from the Big Guys any time soon, there will always be dedicated Amiga programmers around to create the tools we need. Don't worry if some of them jump ship — there are new Amiga programmers coming aboard every day.

Right now, you can have state-of-the-art

multitasking, the fastest machine in town, 24-bit color, and an awful lot of features that owners of Other machines still covet. And, judging from the glorious colors coming out of my crystal ball, the future looks even brighter. So be one of the Few, the Proud, the Amigan... and stay tuned! ✓

METCOM CLASSES

Listed below are the classes currently being planned for METCOM. These are the classes which will be held if enough members show their interest by pre-registering. Each class will be limited to no more than 20 students. Enclosed in this newsletter you should find a registration form. For more information, or if your registration form is missing, contact Harold Williams, 817-483-0537.

- ARexx — programming, using ARexx macros for controlling software, and inter-process communications.
- AmigaDOS/Workbench 2.0 — complete overview of the system software, how to modify the startup procedure, and preferences.
- Telecommunications — modems, software, archiving/unarchiving files, and the MCCC BBS.
- CanDo — understanding the tools, how to create your own software.
- Video Toaster — LightWave 3D, the switcher, the character generator.

Thought For The Month



Computers are not intelligent

They only think they are...

CHAPTER NEWS

Amiga Central

Ray Howard

Our August meeting featured Aaron Lozier demonstrating software called *Virtual Reality Studio*. This software allows one to create worlds and then interact with them. Part of the demo was a walk through of a house with sound effects. This could be used as an aid in modeling a new house or remodeling an existing house. Additions can be made and then viewed in a solid 3D perspective. While this is true, this product will probably be used more to create new 3D interactive games easily. There are some drawbacks to the program. The first is that the objects created cannot be curved... only cubes, triangles and pyramids are used. Another is that the maximum resolution is 320 x 200 with 16 colors. The last drawback is that the sounds must be in RAW format — not IFF formats.

Announced at the meeting was that people wanting to participate in the METCOM 92 flea market need to bring their things to the September meeting or contact one of their chapter officers to make arrangements to drop off things they wish to sell. Discussions about using ARExx, high-speed modems, and *PageStream* were part of the questions and answers section. Mentioned in the rumor section were a possible upgrade of NewTek's *Lightwave* by December 1992. The new fact section brought to light that an minor upgrade of *Deluxe Paint IV* is out. Also mentioned was the need to contact Supra if you need a ROM upgrade for one of their new 9600 baud modems. *Baud Bandit* has also been upgraded to a new version.

Join us in September for more facts, rumors, answers, and fun. Don't forget about METCOM 92 coming up in October.

Amiga North Dallas

Genny White

Well, dear friends, it was another "you shoulda been there" night, but if you HAD come you wouldn't have had a place to sit! We were temporarily in a different meeting room, and coincidentally had a very good turnout, and we almost didn't fit! We'll be back in our regular spot in September, and I hope you're all there. We'll be welcoming David Marshall and his demo of a neat 12-bit audio board (unless the 16-bit one is released by then!) In October, we'll learn about InfoChannel from Sonia King. Then in November, we have a Desktop Publishing evening planned, with several packages being presented. December (can it be in sight already?) will be our traditional games month, with munchies and family members welcome. Also at the September meeting (or rather, just before it at 6 p.m.), Dave Byrne will be offering a hands-on workshop on our own BBS. Just so we can be prepared, let me know if you plan to come and have not already indicated your interest. All are welcome!

Back to the August meeting... in addition to the usual rumors and questions, we had a peek at the State of the Art in color printing, just for our amusement and amazement, from Duane Baade of Tektronix. He showed us samples of output from his own Amiga some years ago, when their wax transfer technology was just starting out. Pretty colorful. After that, the printers advanced to 300 dots-per-inch, 8-colors, any-kind-of-paper capabilities. Unfortunately, they didn't come with Amiga drivers. The latest thing, though, is the Phaser IISD model, just out in July. It uses a solid dye that is heated by the print head to create a gas. Now there are 16 million colors per dot, and the samples he passed around were like photos! The price is stiff

for the average user (\$9,995), but the output is phenomenal, and there will be those who feel it's cheap for what it can do for them. It supports the IBM PC and the Macintosh, but NOT the Amiga (yet?). There's a number to call for more information: 1-800-835-6100. Maybe a few hints from the Amiga user base and we can add that to our already awesome arsenal of graphical miracles. Another user happened to bring a sample of the ol' Canon PJ1080A output: a pretty picture of a dolphin with layered background that was maybe 3X5 feet. Took over 4 hours to print all the pages, and another hour to tape it all together! Well, those of us without a spare \$10K have to make do somehow.

Meanwhile, we heard that Dave Byrne is headed for the World of Commodore show in Pasadena (September 11-13), and will report back to us at the September meeting on what he finds there. And speaking of shows, our Danny Barnett will be going to a Horror Convention at the Dallas Hilton (October 23-25), and will show off a little musical number entitled "Chili Con Carnage" (ick!) that he composed, with his Amiga controlling the MIDI. Glad to see the Amiga and Danny in the spotlight again! More tidbits: Tom Brooks shared rumors of a fix for the Applied Engineering high-density drive that wasn't supported under 2.0. Many things were offered for sale: a 2400 BAUD modem, the monitor being used in the upcoming demo, two small noisy children (yes, mine), and a handful of other things. No better place to find a new home for your old whatsit than a room full of other whatsit-users! (Save up some for the METCOM flea market in October, though!) By the way, we are sold out of the left-mouse-button replacements we got months ago. Must have been a badly needed item for many. We honored the author of LHA, the archiving program that "squishes files real

CHAPTER NEWS

good" (Henry, you're so eloquent!) with a collection in the ol' shareware jar. Support your local shareware writers! Have a question you didn't get around to at the meeting? Henry Ribron is trying to start up a question-and-answer column to add to the newsletter. Watch for more information.

At last our presentation: John Chang of The Edge brought us a couple of neat demonstrations. First, we got to see *OctaMED 3.0 Professional*, the latest and greatest of the MED line. Right now, it's only available in England, and John is trying to bring several copies over for us. The new release is VERY complete, and that makes it more complex than some of the other music programs around. But the music it produces is incredible! It can produce 8-channel output WITH-OUT the MIDI, just driving the Amiga like crazy. It now has notational entry and display of the music, for those who want to see the score. There are lots of music files out there in PD, and you can bring your disks up to The Edge and John will share them with you. (Players available, too.) Tom Brooks also has access to a conversion program to carry SMUS files to the STM (Sound Tracker Module) format, in case you want to unify

your music collection.

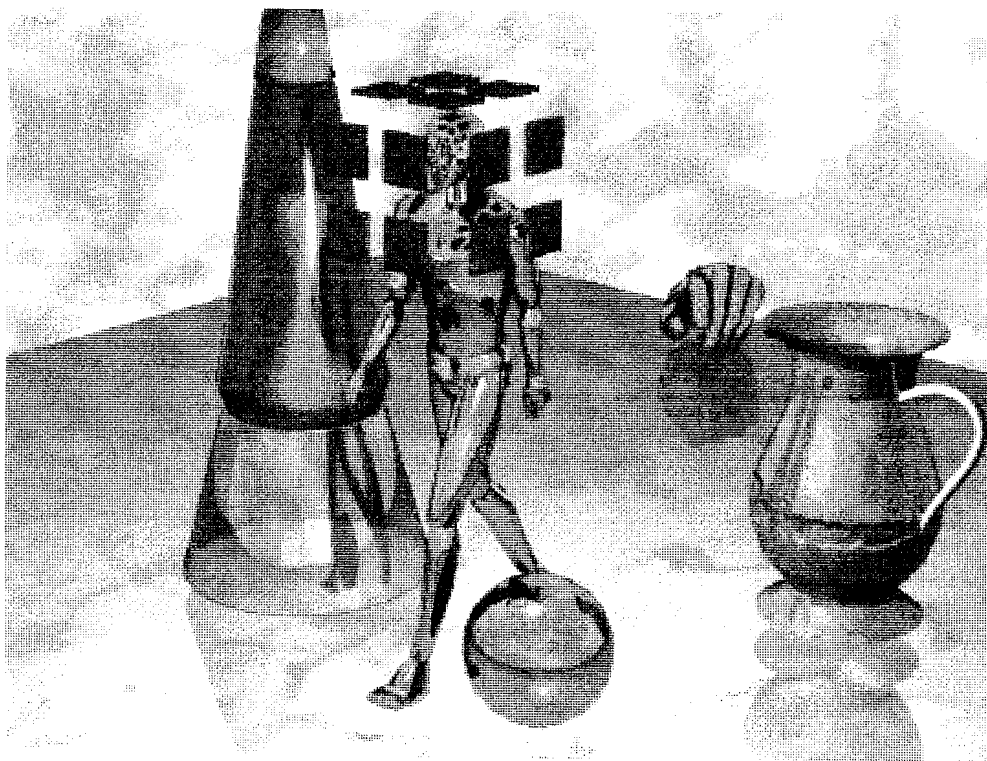
The second part of John's presentation has an interesting background. It seems that pirating has become something of an art in Europe. A game obtained from a questionable source may boot up with a flashy introduction or demo inserted by the guy that cracked its copy protection. You know, "This bootleg software brought to you courtesy of Black Jack Savage", etc. These intros became fancier and more elaborate until they became an art form unto themselves. No longer content to show off their Amiga skills hidden in other people's code, the pirate groups began to compete and even write legit games that were

called "Hardwired" and the "Phenomena Demo". I loved "Phenomena" with its awesome 3D graphics, surrealistic landscape tours, etc. Both of these programs ended up crashing on us, but not before really wowing the crowd. It's not surprising that they are unstable: these maverick programmers start with everything labeled in the manual "Don't Ever Do This:" and find ways to get the Amiga to outperform itself in every aspect of its capabilities. You gotta see it to believe it! There are several multi-disk demos available. Check with John next time you're at The Edge for the restrictions and warnings and how-tos, then enjoy the show. We

were pleased to meet John's long-time friend and assistant Kyle Mardis, an Amiga productivity software distributor who does a fine job of switching disks and plugging in cables. (I'm sure he has other talents...)

Last but not least, we had a gaggle of doorprizes. Three were from a generous member who didn't hang around to be thanked, and didn't

write down his name so Henry could remember it. Thanks so much, Mysterious Stranger! He brought us a Buck Rogers T-shirt (won by Don Sobieck), a copy of *Air Strike* (won by William Dockendorf), and *The Keys*



Bob Wn's World — by MCCC member Bob Morgan — on MCCC-A_431

outstanding examples of the Amiga's best tricks in graphics, etc. (One example of this is the *Pinball Dreams* simulation, with great graphics and motion.) SO, what John brought us was a sampling of the best, a demo

CHAPTER NEWS

to *Maramon* (won by Norbert Firman). From our friends at Metropolitan, we had a copy of *Pictionary* (which went home with Tom Brooks), and a *Chuck Yeager* game (to be enjoyed by Kenny Teoh). The Edge brought us *Civilization* (look out, Eric Watson, it's addictive!) and as a special treat, back issues of European Amiga magazines (most with disks) for EVERYBODY THERE. Thanks again, to all! See you next month.

Arl/Grand Prairie

Brad Dumler

At the August meeting, our chapter got a great deal of info from our President, Foster McCowan, on some new developments in the world of Commodore. It seems that the demise of our 8-bit machines is still greatly exaggerated. It was brought to everyone's attention that the beloved C64 has reached the age of 10 years old since its introduction. Quite a respectable milestone in these times of such rapid technological advancement and technical obsolescence. We heard a rumor of possible development of a CD-ROM drive by a well-known C64/C128 hardware developer. Be watching out also for a new GEOS graphics application that will offer full-color 80-column capability for C128 users. Also, be sure to take a look at the September/October RUN magazine for an article by Foster about a shareware GEOS application. How fortunate we are to have a published author in our midst.

One of our members brought a new C128 audio digitizer program called *Zounds* to show us. The digitizer package was created by Mike Neus, a C128 enthusiast in Dallas. This digitizer package includes a schematic for building the audio digitizer cartridge to record sounds, and the associated software

for recording and playing back the audio captured. Sample audio clips were played for everyone's amusement. If you are interested in this digitizer package, let me know and I'll try to get you in touch with the right folks.

We finally had our program on the C128 features and capabilities at the July chapter meeting. I got to be the featured speaker. Quite a few of our members in attendance are users of the C128, so some of the discussion may have been a repeat of things they already knew. But I tried to point out some of the not-so-common information that I hoped to make everyone aware of. To help me through the presentation, I used a couple of interactive demonstration programs that are available in our club library. One is called "basic7.0 demo.40" and is — guess what — a description and demonstration of some of the commands unique to BASIC 7.0 in the C128. The other is aptly titled "esc code demo.40" and it shows all of the ESCape key functions built into C128s. Both demos run in 40-column mode. Unfortunately, I don't know which library disk these programs can be found on. I acquired them on a disk of utility programs that was put together for METCOM a couple of years ago. Your librarian might be able to help you locate them. I highly recommend that you take a look at these if you missed the July meeting. Even if you have been using your C128 for a long time, you might be reminded of some interesting things that will make your computing time more enjoyable and/or more productive. It did me a lot of good to refresh my memory about all of the wonderful capabilities just waiting at my fingertips. You might also want to refer to a programming reference guide for additional documentation of the various BASIC 7.0 and ESCape commands. I find it very helpful to keep a copy of the ESCape key commands beside my system to use

as a cheat-sheet.

We plan to see and discuss C64 and C128 word processors at the September meeting. We will meet at the Grand Prairie Public Library as usual. Remember also that our chapter workshops are held at this library location. Check the Calendar of Events here in the newsletter for the particulars.

Fort Worth

Mary Louise Hagemeyer

For a while we thought we would have to hold our meeting in the lobby, because somebody else was using our room, but a security guard kindly opened another room for us. If you ever arrive for a Fort Worth meeting and don't find it, just look for a note on the door.

John Burt opened the meeting with "Elvis Tribute", complete with picture, as performed by Sid Player 10.3 and downloaded from Q-Link. He followed this with a compatibility test, a biorhythm printer, a detective program called *The Panther* — the butler was guilty — and a "Wheel of Fortune" type of program called *Word Guess*. Keeping up with current events, John demonstrated *The Games*, a commercial program from Epyx with good sound and graphics in which the user can compete in many Olympic events and perhaps wear out a joystick or two.

One of our members had had trouble with an ARC file, so we had a demonstration of how to use *Omega-Q II*. Brenda Sessums had brought a copy of *Luscher Profile* by Mindscape, a series of color and pattern preference tests that produces a personality analysis.

Next month Brenda is going to show how she uses GEOS on a C64 with RAM expansion. All you GEOS users, plan to be there and share your expertise. The meeting will be Saturday, September 12, 1:30 p.m., in Room 540 at TCOM.

The Fine Print

The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club

Statement of Purpose: The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club is a not-for-profit organization devoted to the collection and dissemination of computer knowledge, to the encouragement of computer education, and to the use of Commodore computers in the home, at school, and in business.

Legal Stuff: The MCCC is not connected with Commodore Business Machines, Inc. Commodore and Commodore product names (PET, CBM, VIC, C64, C128, and Amiga) are registered trademarks of Commodore, Inc.

Meetings and Membership: Our meetings are open to all. Family membership dues are \$24 per year or \$15 for six months. And entitle the member to a monthly mailed copy of the MCCC News, free access to the club's extensive public domain and shareware software library, and discounts at many area merchants. An additional \$12 annual fee provides access to the MCCC multi-user Bulletin Board System.

The MCCC News

Copyright Information: Material printed in the MCCC News is not copyrighted unless so noted. Articles may be reprinted or otherwise distributed by other user groups or by individuals who may find it helpful as long as proper credit is given to the author and to the MCCC.

Advertising: The MCCC News accepts two kinds of advertising. Member ads are those which are submitted by a member and which are not of a commercial nature. There is no charge for member ads. Commercial ads are those which advertise multiple like items for sale. Rates for camera-ready commercial ads are as follows for a single month or (prepaid consecutive three months): Full Page — \$36 (\$96); Half Page — \$18 (\$48); Quarter Page — \$12 (\$32); Business Card — \$6 (\$16). Materials to be inserted will cost \$.08 per copy (duplication not included) and must be inserted into all newsletters for the month.

Articles: Members are encouraged to submit articles. Articles should be submitted as ASCII text or in Amiga WordPerfect or Final Copy format. They may be uploaded to the MCCC BBS, to StarText, or submitted on disk. If these methods are not possible, I will, as a last resort, accept printed articles. If graphics need to be included they may be submitted as Amiga IFF files, PageStream structured drawings, Professional Draw clips, or, again as a last resort, printed output.

Deadline: The deadline for submissions to the MCCC News is 7am of the fourth Saturday of each month. Payment must accompany all ad copy. Make checks payable to MCCC and mail c/o Bill Raecke, 2614 Charolais Way, Arlington, Texas 76017.

Extra Copies: Extra Copies of the MCCC News are available at \$1 per copy. Orders should be forwarded with the required fee by the regular newsletter deadline.

Normal Meeting Schedule

2nd Tuesday	Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
2nd Tuesday	Arlington/Grand Prairie Chapter
2nd Thursday	Amiga West Chapter
2nd Saturday	Fort Worth Chapter
2nd Saturday	Arlington/Grand Prairie Workshop
3rd Wednesday	Amiga North Dallas Chapter
3rd Thursday	Amiga Central Chapter
Last Saturday	MCCC Board of Directors

SIGS

Toaster Society	Brett Hester	214-233-5493
VidSIG	Chuck Johnson	817-478-7313

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(C64/128 help)	Joe Ostrokol	817-534-1990
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BBS Coordinator	Okley Moss	817-282-7751
Newsletter Editor	Bill Raecke	817-465-2014
Past President	Craig Bird	813-786-3360

BBS Numbers	817-268-4191	817-268-4196
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Secretary	Brad Dumler	817-483-2322
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Treasurer	Julia Sookma	817-293-8691
Secretary	M.L. Hagemeyer	817-732-0982
Librarian	James Dunnam	817-923-6153

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sep 8 Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

Sep 8 Arlington/Grand Prairie Chapter
6:30 pm — Grand Prairie Public Library
Conover Drive, Grand Prairie

Sep 10 Amiga West Chapter
7:30 pm — Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine
Lancaster & Camp Bowie, Fort Worth

Sep 10 Dallas Toaster Society
7:00 pm — King of Glory Lutheran Church
6411 LBJ Freeway, Dallas

Sep 12 Fort Worth Chapter
1:30 pm — Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine
Lancaster & Camp Bowie, Fort Worth

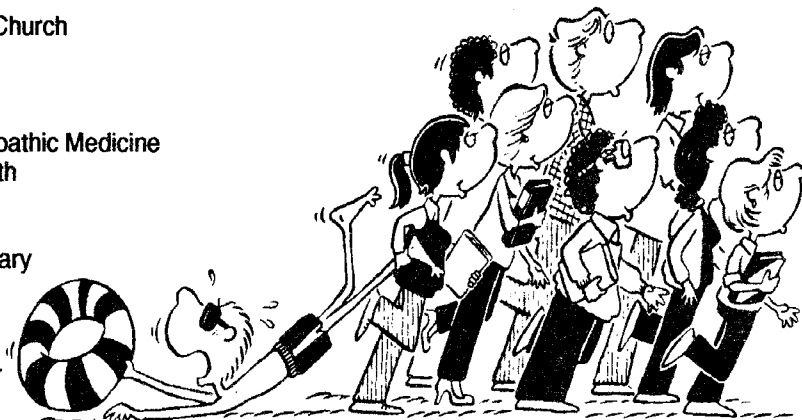
Sep 12 Arlington/Grand Prairie Workshop
1:30 pm — Grand Prairie Public Library
Conover Drive, Grand Prairie

Sep 16 Amiga North Dallas Chapter
7:30 pm — Richardson Civic Center
411 West Arapaho, Richardson

Sep 17 Amiga Central Chapter
7:30 pm — Arlington Community Center
2800 S. Center, Arlington

Sep 19 Amiga Beginner's Class
10:00 am — Metropolitan Computer Products
4372 Spring Valley, Dallas

Sep 26 MCCC Board of Directors
10:00 am — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills



October Newsletter Deadline — 7am, September 26

MCCC NEWS

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